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SENSITIVE

DEPT PASS EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE FOR INFO

STATE FOR WHA/CAR (ACADIEUX)
(VDEPIRRO) INL (KBROWN)
INR/RES (RWARNER)

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: Jamaica: ICE launches of Operation JOLT to target lottery scammers

Summary

¶1. (U) Jamaica -- May 27-28, the Charg d'Affairs and ICE Attach opened the first JOLT Task Force joint training session and operation - that's the Jamaica Operations Linked to Telemarketing. In 2008, it is estimated that more than USD 30 million was transferred to Jamaica by victims of the lottery scam. By COB May 28, the joint U.S.-Jamaican teams had arrested 12, seized evidence, including victims list and several vehicles, including one stolen from the U.S. End Summary.

Lottery Scam

¶2. (SBU) In January 2008, relying on our strong bi-national relationship, the Government of Jamaica (GOJ) requested assistance from the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) office at the embassy to fight this new crime wave. In April, 2008, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was executed between DHS-ICE and the Jamaica Constabulary Force to establish JOLT. JOLT is a joint ICE - GOJ (JCF, Jamaica Customs, the Passport Immigration and Citizenship Agency, the Director of Public Prosecution office, the Magistrate Court of Montego Bay, and the Financial Investigative Division of the Ministry of Finance) program. All activities, including the posting of ICE special agents and analysts dedicated to JOLT, are being funded directly by ICE.

¶3. (U) This new Jamaican project is based on a successful ICE program operating in Canada since 1998 which has so far recovered more than USD 14 million dollars to U.S. and Canadian victims of telemarketing fraud. This Canadian operation has also resulted in 26 U.S. Grand Jury indictments and 161 U.S. and Canada-based arrests.

Training Session

¶4. (U) After the Opening Ceremony concluded, 22 trainers consisting of U.S. ICE special agents, members of the State of Minnesota Department of Public Safety Fraud Squad, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), and Western Union Corporate Security began a day-long operational training program. The 28 trainees present were from the JCF, Jamaica Customs, the Passport Immigration and Citizenship Agency, the Director of Public Prosecution office, the Magistrate Court of Montego Bay, and the Financial Investigative Division of the Ministry of Finance.

Operation

¶5. (SBU) At 5:30 am May 28, the first official JOLT operation in Montego Bay commenced, the nexus of the Jamaican lottery scam. When the operation ended, joint ICE /JCF teams had executed 9 search warrants, made 12 arrests and collected a considerable amount of evidence. During the raid, one suspect ate his cell phone sim card as the JOLT team entered. The team was also able to seize pages and pages of victims' names. A film crew from ABC's Nightline accompanied the JOLT team and was able to film the operation as it progressed. In addition to the computers, vehicles and other evidence seized, the JOLT team recovered fake DHS letterhead used by the scammers to convince victims that their winnings are legit.

Additional Attendees - Jolt Launch

¶6. (U) Also in attendance at the launch and associated Press Conference were: (GOJ) Commissioner of Police, Hardley Lewin; Commissioner of Customs, Danville Walker; Director of Public Prosecution, Paula Llewellyn; and (USG) ICE Office of International Affairs -- Operations Chief Caribbean/Canada, Scot Hatfield, the Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Illinois, Bruce Reppert, and FTC Director for the Middle District Steve Baker. Press coverage for the launch was both local (print, radio, TV) and international (ABC's Nightline and CBS affiliate from Minnesota).

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